



# RAIDERS DOWN RANGE



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Diary of the Soldiers of the 1st Brigade Combat Team

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## New PJCC opens in Salah ad Din

Spc. Jimmy D. Lane Jr.  
1st BCT PAO

TIKRIT, Iraq - Leaders of Salah ad Din Province and the 1st Brigade Combat Team attended a ceremony for the opening of the new Provincial Joint Coordination Center in Tikrit July 11.

The new building will be a center for provincial government operations in Salah ad Din province, such as maintaining communications about current operations with numerous state institutions and supporting Joint Coordination Centers, said PJCC director Gen. Eissa Abid Mohmood.

"Our center coordinates with humanitarian organizations and health companies to help the damaged areas of Baiji and Samarra," Mohmood



Col. Mark McKnight, 1st BCT commander, takes a tour of the new Salah ad Din Provincial Joint Coordination Center along with provincial deputy governor Abdullah Al-Jubori and other officials at the grand opening ceremony in Tikrit July 11.

said. "Also, the most important duty of the center is connecting with the national center in Baghdad, which is considered the supervisor of all JCCs in Iraq. It coordinates between Coalition Forces and government agencies in the province to establish security in our nation."

The contractor responsible for the building's completion expressed pride in having taken part in the construction of the project.

"When we started working on this building, which was the old Al-Hummayat Hospital, much effort was needed because there was much debris and the building's body presented a bad situation," said contractor Ziad Ibrahim Jasim. "Much hard work was needed for us to complete the request to finish the building in such a limited time. Most days there were up to 100 workers, but impossible things can be done by men who want it done."

The opening of the new center is not only seen in a practical sense; this center is a symbol for good things to come and the fruit of joint efforts between the Iraqis and the Coalition Forces.

"It shows that there is a successful project completed by the Iraqis with little assistance from Coalition Forces," said Capt. Zach Szilagyi, assistant Iraqi political liaison attached to Headquarters and Headquarters Company 1st BCT. "It also shows the Iraqis have the will and the spirit to make their country whole and successful. This project is the perfect example of overall how those philosophies can come together and create a quantifiable product from the efforts of the Coalition and the Iraqis working



Photos by Spc. Jimmy D. Lane Jr.

Salah ad Din province Deputy Governor Abdullah Al-Jubori cuts the ribbon to the new Provincial Joint Coordination Center as PJCC Director Gen. Eissa Abid Mohmood, 1st BCT commander Col. Mark McKnight and other Coalition Forces and local dignitaries look on in Tikrit July 11.

together."

The center was attacked recently by a vehicle borne improvised explosive device which halted construction. After rallying the workers to the importance of the project, Coalition Forces and the Iraqi provincial government were able to get the project back on track.

"Due to the security situation and the attack of the compound, the contractor had to stall on the construction because there where many workers who were afraid for their lives and their families' lives," Szilagyi said. "It put our construction timeline two months behind schedule. I as well as General Eissa felt the need to pressure the contractor to get the project done as soon as possible as a morale booster to show the province that despite the killings and violence, there are stories of success throughout the province for the people."

## Fallen Iraqi Army Soldiers remembered in ceremony

Spc. Jimmy D. Lane Jr.  
1st BCT PAO

TIKRIT, Iraq - A memorial ceremony was held July 6 at the Iraqi Army compound in Tikrit for two Iraqi Soldiers who were killed when a vehicle borne improvised explosive device exploded by the gate of the compound June 19.

The ceremony was a chance for Iraqi Soldiers to honor those who gave their lives for the defense of Iraq and its people.

"This was a chance to reflect on their lives and their sacrifice," said Capt. Mariano Wecer, 1st BCT Military Transition Team operations officer. "It was so that other Soldiers can remember them for giving the ultimate sacrifice for the Iraqi people and the Iraqi Army. It is important to remember these Soldiers so that the Iraqi people know there is a

general concern for the effort to raise this country back to the greatness it once was."

Iraqi Soldiers honored the fallen by naming sections of their compound after the men who gave their lives.

"The two martyrs sacrificed for this headquarters, the province and this country," said Brig. Gen. Abdul Jabbar 1st Iraqi Army Brigade Commander. "My brothers, remember these names. The street from the brigade entrance to the headquarters will be called Abdu-Allah Saud Al-Jubori Street, and the weapons range will be dedicated to Karim Mohammed Khalaf Al-Dulaimy. They are heroes."

Jabbar said the sacrifice of the Soldiers was not in vain and what they died for was part of a greater good.

"The martyrs sacrificed so that

the smile could stay on the faces of the Iraqi children and so our women can stay happy," Jabbar said. "June 19 will be remembered, and the Soldiers who died will be held in regard as high as the mountains, and our memory of them will rise as high as the Iraqi sun."

American and Iraqi Soldiers alike attended the ceremony, and compensation was paid to the families of the Soldiers who were killed.

Coalition Forces leaders spoke at the ceremony and offered their condolences.

"There is no greater gift a man can give than to give up his life for the protection of others, as did the brave Soldiers the morning their lives were taken at this headquarters," said 1st Brigade Combat Team commander Col. Mark McKnight. "The Soldiers we honor today will never be forgotten."



Spc. Jimmy D. Lane Jr.

Col. Mark McKnight, 1st BCT commander, presents compensation to an Iraqi Soldier wounded in a VBIED attack during a memorial ceremony July 6 in Tikrit.

## Lane Down Range

# The bad guys look like the good guys

Spc. Jimmy D. Lane Jr.  
1st BCT PAO

The situation here in Iraq is different than any other in history. There are two main things going on here; we are fighting an insurgency and helping build a strong, secure democratic government.

As a journalist and a Soldier, I get to see both side of the effort. One day I am chasing insurgents through fruit groves during a house raid, and the next day I am present at the opening of a new government center. I guess the hardest part is recognizing the difference between the people who want freedom and those who mean to destroy the effort.

When I ride down the road or have to stop on a highway to pull security, I get a little jumpy. I try to be polite and patient, but in my heart I believe that is a type of complacency. I know that

patience and politeness made a few Soldiers who have died wait one second too long before recognizing a threat.

I have become belligerent while pulling security, and pointed my weapon at a single driver coming up to checkpoint faster than he should. I can see the person in the car realize we are there and slow down, some young kid just cruising too fast as young kids in any country do. I have done it myself. But you never know if it is a kid or a guy running late to work. By the time you get a glimpse of the person in the car, shrapnel from a 155 round would kill you.

I know most any Soldier who goes outside the wire can relate to that. It wrenches my gut wondering if I should take a shot or wait that extra second. This enemy wears no uniform, has no honor and will kill anyone in his path.



It is so frustrating. We as Americans are true in our heart to the mission, even though much of the time we don't want to be. We want a set enemy with a large force that we can seek out and have a battle with. At least that is what we were trained to do. We were not trained to be police. A cop has a hard job. They are constantly living in a scenario of doubt. The next guy they pull over could be the one that tries to kill them. I can totally relate to all the cops that I laughed at when I was one of those young kids speeding around in my dad's car. I know why they are overly suspicious and live a lonely life.

We want to bust the bad guy, but who the heck is he? We work so hard to get limited intelligence. Most of the time we find out who the bad guy is after he blows himself up along with a couple of Soldiers, a few Iraqi Police and a couple dozen women and children.

I believe things are changing. I see the evidence in the seven short months I have been here. People are getting angry. They want to live and work in peace. Most of them are curious about us and interested in our culture. They are all suckers for free trade and capitalism. I bet any given insurgent has owned a cell phone, wanted a nice car and watched a music video.

Me, I just want to go home to my wife and kids. They are my goal in life. I joined the Army to provide them security. It seems like I am doing that for the whole world right now.

## Chaplain's Corner

# Strength of spirit gets you through war

Chaplain Mark Nordstrom  
1st BCT Chaplain

During Operation Iraqi Freedom I had to tell a young specialist that his mother's sister was killed, and by his own cousin, "in the house we played in and had picnics at" as he sadly said. Can you imagine how heartsick he was? We were in the middle of sand storms and major combat operations and there was no way to get him out of the combat zone and home.

He came to me and said, "Chaplain, can you read something to me out of the Bible?" We read Psalm 77, hunkered down with a red-lens flashlight at night in a sandstorm with bad guys all around. We considered the difference a preposition can make: God will take you through trials, not out of them. And then he walked back into the night and into the fight.

During combat deployments our need for spiritual strength is much more apparent. We always need spiritual strength, but deployments like this one demand that we do the things necessary to become and stay strong. Our buddies and our families depend on us.

Staying strong spiritually, like most everything in life, comes with preparation. It's never too late to pre-



pare. You can prepare right now to face the rest of this deployment with strength and grace. This is a special time for all of us, and it demands the best we can give.

"To every man there comes . . . that special moment when he is . . . offered that chance to do a very special thing unique to him . . . what a tragedy if that moment finds him unprepared."

Winston Churchill.  
One way to prepare is to read God's word and gain instruction for facing trials from Him. The young specialist who had suffered such a great family tragedy knew this, and strengthened himself.

God's word will see you through the hard times. A second way to prepare is through prayer. Prayer will sustain you for the long haul.

On March 25, 2003 a sergeant, doing his duty as a soldier, killed many Iraqi Soldiers. Afterwards he felt emptied of his humanity; discouraged and unfocused. Though he felt bad, a Soldier doesn't have time to afford the luxury of feeling sorry for himself and give

up the fight. So for a short hour we talked and prayed; for him, for his buddies. Refreshed and refocused, he went back to the fight, and life. Taking time for prayer and reflection had given him the strength he needed.

So many people miss out on the tremendous personal victory of getting through tough times because they give up. They don't prepare for the trials and then compound their mistake by giving in to despair and feelings of hopelessness.

My prayer for you as we see this long deployment through to the end is that you will prepare for what lies ahead through reading God's word and spending time in prayer. It's never too late to begin. Why don't you take time right now?



## Sunrise over Paliwoda...

The color and presence of the sun in this picture taken around 6:00 a.m. in Balad gives Soldiers preparing for missions an idea how hot the day will be.

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# Five Cs simplify improvised explosive device fight

Staff Sgt. Mark St. Clair  
MNC-I PAO

CAMP VICTORY, Iraq – Five potentially life-saving words are being driven home to Coalition service members and civilians throughout the Operation Iraqi Freedom theater.

Confirm, clear, call, cordon, and control are the five Cs that represent a simple set of guidelines that Coalition Forces can and should use when encountering a suspected improvised explosive device. “The reason we teach the five Cs is because they make an easy to remember guide for (service members) to follow if they suspect or find an IED,” said Alex Szigedi, operations officer, Joint Improvised Explosive Device Defeat Task Force, Camp Victory.

Using methods like the five Cs simplifies IED awareness and “helps in the decision-making process, helping it become second-nature. They’re also on the IED smart card,” said Lt. Col. Ted Martin, chief, JIEDDTF. The IED smart card is produced by the Victory-based IED Working Group.

The IED Working Group meets weekly. Liaisons from major subordinate ground units, information operations delegates, ordnance-destruction, contractors and others come together to discuss advances being made in the IED fight, changes in insurgent tactics and the most important issue: how to get valuable information down to where it matters — the troops on the ground.

“We’d never encountered anything like (IEDs) on the battlefield, and we’re not shy about going to people with expertise,” Martin said. Some of the “people with expertise” have been Coalition soldiers in the British army, who have been dealing with IEDs in theaters like Northern Ireland for years. The British used a Four-C model to counter IEDs in the past, and Coalition Forces in Iraq used that as a framework and adapted it to the present fight, Martin said.

## Confirm

The first step when encountering a suspected IED is confirming its existence. If service members suspect an IED while performing 5- and 25-meter searches of their positions, they should act like it could detonate at any moment, even if the suspected IED turns out to be a false alarm. Using as few people as possible, troops should begin looking for telltale signs of IEDs — like wires or pieces of ordnance sticking out of the ground. Martin said, “There’s no place like Iraq when it comes to ammunition on the ground.” So what looks like an IED may be a piece of unexploded ordnance but it should be treated like an IED until it is



If an improvised explosive device has been found and trained personnel have been called in to manage the situation, troops on the scene should cordon and control access routes to the danger area.



Courtesy photos

Robots, such as this one two Soldiers are working with in the above picture, are used to minimize the risk of injury to trained service members dealing with improvised explosive device threats throughout Iraq.

determined that it’s not.

While searching, troops should try to stay as safe as possible, using anything available for protection. If a better view is needed while searching, soldiers should move as safely as possible while maintaining as much distance as they can from the suspected IED to continue searching. Rifle scopes, binoculars and even cameras can be used to search from a safer distance. It also may be helpful to ask local Iraqis for information, but troops should never ask them to search too. Personnel should never try to touch a suspected IED and should never try to do the job explosive ordnance disposal technicians are specially trained to do.

## Clear

If an IED has been confirmed, the next step is to clear the area. The safe distance is determined by several factors: the tactical situation, avoiding being predictable and moving several hundred meters away from the IED. Everyone within the safe distance should be evacuated. If more room is needed, such as when the IED is vehicle-borne, soldiers should clear a wider area and constantly direct people out of the danger area. The only people going near the IED should be those who are there to diffuse it, such as EOD personnel. While clearing the area, soldiers should constantly be on the lookout for secondary IEDs. If any such devices are found, they should reposition to a safe area and report the find to the highest ranking service member on the scene. Soldiers should try not to set patterns while performing clearing procedures, so the enemy will not be able to learn from their tactics and techniques. By not setting patterns and monitoring non-Coalition personnel watching the situation, troops are better protected.

## Call

While the area surrounding the IED is being cleared, a nine-line IED/UXO report should be called in. The report is much like the nine-line report used for medically evacuating casualties, and includes the necessary information for the unit’s Tactical Operations Center to assess the situation and prepare an appropriate response to clear the IED as the threat.

## Cordon

After the area has been cleared and the IED has been called in, Soldiers should establish blocking positions around the area to prevent vehicle and foot traffic from approaching the IED; make sure the safe area is truly safe by checking for secondary IEDs; and make use of all available cover. The effected area’s entire perimeter should be secured and dominated by all available personnel, and any available obstacles should be used to block vehicle approach routes.

Troops should scan both near and far and look for an enemy who may be watching and waiting to detonate the IED. Insurgents often hide in locations where they can see the device and ascertain the right moment to detonate. Personnel should randomly check people leaving the area to deter attacks, again avoiding setting patterns. Establishing obstacles to control approaches to security positions is another tactic the JIEDDTF stresses, since insurgents may try to attack local security forces using a vehicle-borne IED.

## Control

Since the distance of all personnel from the IED directly affects their safety, service members should control the site to prevent someone from straying dangerously close to the IED until it is cleared. The task force stresses that no one should leave the area until EOD gives the “all clear.” While controlling the site, make sure all the troops in the area know what to do if attacked with small arms or rocket-propelled grenades.

If troops are a part of a patrol or convoy that finds an IED, they should remember the Five Cs in order to deal with the situation as quickly and safely as possible. An IED that is found is still an IED attack, said the JIEDDTF. By finding the IED, it’s the enemy’s attack that has been disrupted.

“(The Five Cs) reinforce IED awareness and training. It’s a checklist that helps you think; it’s a common-sense thing ... to help people remember the proper steps when encountering an IED,” Szigedi said.

(Editor’s note: Information in this article was provided by the JIEDDTF.)

**Use the five C’s to  
secure an IED site.**

**Confirm : the device**

**Clear : the area**

**Call : EOD**

**Cordon : the perimeter**

**Control : site access**



**STAY ALIVE**

### Some gave all

# Determined Soldier loses life in an IED attack

Spc. Jimmy D. Lane Jr.  
1st BCT PAO

SAMARRA, Iraq - Soldiers of C Company, 1st Battalion, 128th Infantry Regiment lost one of their most determined Soldiers to an attack by an improvised explosive device June 26.

Spc. Charles A. Kaufman of Fairchild, Wisconsin was killed when an IED exploded on the road he was traveling near his vehicle while on a combat patrol from Patrol Base Olson on the way to Baghdad.

Kaufman was remembered by his peers and leaders as the type of man who was always concerned for his fellow Soldiers' well being and feelings.

"He was always willing to listen to anyone that wanted to talk," said Spc. Aaron Bell, a member of Kaufman's squad.

"Kaufman was the type of person and friend who no matter what problems he had going on himself, he would always take the time to help you with your problems," said Spc. Chad Chialda, who worked with Kaufman in the same squad. "Your well being mattered to him."

Kaufman was very determined to

do his job in an expedient and correct manner. His peers remember him as always having a good attitude and being ready for any mission with no complaints.

"Charles was one man in his squad who never questioned why we had to do anything," said Sgt. 1st Class Darrin Behne, Kaufman's squad leader. "He always just said, 'yes, sergeant' and accomplished the task to the best of his ability."

"Kaufman knew his job and knew it well," said Sgt. Brandon Hensiak, a member of Kaufman's team. "When you told him to do something, you knew that he was going to get it done, and done right. When given a responsibility, he would take it seriously, as a driver he would always be one of the first soldiers out there preparing his truck for the day's missions. His personal equipment was



Courtesy photo

Spc. Charles Kaufman was killed by an IED June 26 on the way to Baghdad.

always ready to go at a moment's notice. As a result of all this, he would have made a good team leader for his squad. He was already someone most people in the squad looked up to in one way or another."

Kaufman's determination to do well was evident before he ever came to Iraq. At one point before his deployment, Kaufman was involved in an accident, but still pushed not only to deploy, but to be reunited with the Wisconsin Army National Guardsmen with whom he drilled every month.

"Spc. Kaufman's determination to go to Iraq was shown when he was offered a medical discharge after falling out of a tree stand, cracking several ribs and rupturing his spleen," said Sgt. Jeffrey Sieg, one of

Kaufman's leaders. "He made special efforts to go up the ranks to ensure that he would meet back up with us in Iraq once he recovered."

Kaufman's team spent all their time together, much of the time living in very cramped quarters. Those who worked with Kaufman got to know him well.

"Charles was a great guy," said Sgt. Nathan Harter, another of Kaufman's leaders. "I spent about three months in a dorm sized room living with him and four others. We ran numerous missions and had plenty of memories which I wouldn't trade for the world. I prefer to remember the good times I had with Charles rather than mourn his loss."

Kaufman will be best remembered for his attitude toward life. When his fellow Soldiers were down, he made them feel better just by being there.

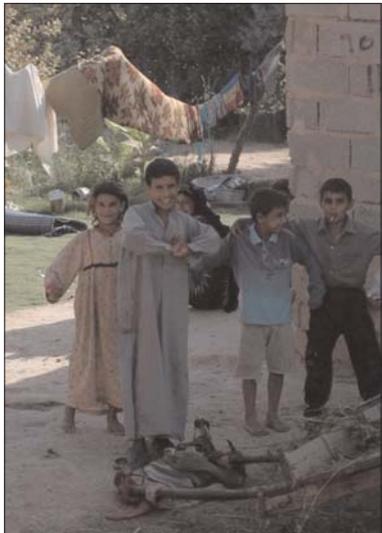
"He had a smile that reflected his attitude that life was a gift, not a hassle and barely let anything bring him down for long," said Spc. Aaron Wolk, a member of Kaufman's squad. "He left this gift to us when he passed. We can all still see that cocky, smiling smirk on his face."

## Our home in Iraq



Photos by Spc. Jimmy D. Lane Jr.

One Iraqi mother stands vigilant guard over her puppies on a farm in Balad. Shortly after this picture the photographer was chased from the scene by the mother.



A group of children are all smiles after receiving handfuls of candy from Soldiers near Balad.



An Iraqi Soldier receives corrective training in the form of the front leaning rest position for talking at a briefing by an Iraqi Army major.



An Iraqi boy yawns at an Iraqi Army ceremony in Tikrit.



Iraqis prepare food for lunch inside the PJCC building in Tikrit at the grand opening.



Two Iraqi Soldiers make their way to morning formation via motorcycle. Most of the Soldiers live near the compound.



Two Iraqis pose in front of an Iraqi Army recruitment poster.

# Air Force provides help from above

Spc. Jimmy D. Lane Jr.  
1st BCT PAO

Sometimes Soldiers can't accomplish all they need to because of lack of intelligence about an enemy's position or because they are pinned down by oncoming forces. When the Soldiers' missions can't be completed from the ground, the Army calls on the Air Force for assistance.

"We provide close air support," said Air Force Staff Sgt. Tony Hall, a tactical air command and control specialist, part of the tactical air control party assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Brigade Combat Team. "I assist joint terminal attack control in the execution of close air support missions. Basically, I provide a communications link between the Army and Air Force."

The JTAC is responsible for the control of Air Force fighter jets and bombers in Iraq, Hall said. The Air Force has air superiority in Iraq, and they use the advantage in several different ways.

"When artillery does counter fire missions, we make sure the air is clear of fixed wing aircraft. If there is a counter fire mission, we have to get the maximum altitude of the ordnance to make sure we don't shoot down our own planes," Hall said.

The Air Force can assist the Army in many ways in a combat zone.

"There are about five different things we can provide an Army commander," said Air Force Lt. Col. Jessie Voisin, 1st BCT Air Liaison Officer. "One thing we bring to the fight is presence. Say for example, a commander is receiving attacks from the western portion of his area of operation. He can fire mortars, send out sniper teams or other things. He can also call for a jet to fly over at a thousand feet. The enemy doesn't know we know where they are, all they know is that a fighter jet suddenly appears out of nowhere."

"We can also provide coverage in gaps or flexibility in aviation," Voisin said. "Helicopters can't be on station at all times. We can augment their coverage. Fixed wing aircraft also don't experience the same problems as helicopters. If there is a dust storm, the helicopters probably only fly medical evacuation sorties. Also if the helicopters run out of gas, the fixed wing can provide coverage in the times that the helicopters can't be out there."

The Air Force element has a unique advantage in its ability to offer non-traditional intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance.

"Normally you would have to go through a national chain to get a satellite or predator overhead," Voisin said. "We can watch things like highways, pipelines, power lines or other types of infrastructure, with the ability to do something if we find anything. They have ordnance onboard, so if they see a truck fixing to blow up a pipeline, they can do something about it."

The Air Force also provides support in the form of kinetic operations. Kinetic ops are basically types of offensive operations.



Courtesy photo

An Air Force TACP watches from a distance as a bomb dropped from an F-16 fighter jet explodes on an island in the Tigris River near the city of Balad. The Air Force was called in for air support after Coalition Forces had received numerous mortar attacks from the island. The purpose of the kinetic ops mission was terrain denial and a show of force.

"One type of kinetic op is terrain denial of traditional point of origin sites for mortars or rockets," Voisin said. "The other is pre-planned raids, if we need to go in and blow up a house or watch an avenue of escape, fixed wing can also look for guys running away."

The Air Force also provides direct air support to troops on the ground who are unable to advance because of an enemy who is dug in or in a position that the troops can't get to from where they are.

"The final thing we offer the ground commander is quick response to troops in contact situations, or the Army 911, basically," Voisin said. "We can have a fixed wing over the site in less than ten minutes, providing presence, assistance and ordnance on target in accordance with the ground commander's intent."

The Airmen who provide the support to the 1st BCT say they enjoy what they do, because it gives them a chance to participate in the battle.

"My job is important to JTAC, because I make

sure he has radio contact with aircraft and the Army on the ground," said SrA. Joey McCain, a TACCS assigned to HHC 1st BCT. "The coolest part of the job is seeing stuff blow up. Being on the frontlines with the Army is not something the Air Force usually gets to do unless they join the Army or the Marines. We have the opportunity to be on the front with a battalion or watch the operation from the aircraft point of view."

"One of the main things about this job that is cool is we get to call in air strikes and blow stuff up," Hall said. "You talk to any TACCS and they'll tell you that's the coolest part of their job."

In the end, the Air Force has proven itself to be an important, lethal part of the Army's mission here in Iraq.

"Our importance is an ace-in-the-hole kind of deal," Hall said. "When the Army gets into a situation that can't be taken care of with artillery, ground troops or helicopters, they know they can call on JTAC to bring a massive, precise amount of ordnance to the battlefield from the air."

## Iraqis, Coalition re-open hospital in Owja

Spc. James Green  
1st BCT PAO

OWJA, Iraq – Coalition Forces in Iraq are trying to do more than just establish a new government and make the streets safe from insurgents. They are also trying to help the people with basic necessities like healthcare.

Soldiers with 2nd Battalion, 7th Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, Task Force Liberty have worked with Iraqi health officials in Owja, Salah ad Din province to open a hospital for the general public. This hospital will provide all the basic healthcare of a regular hospital to include gynecology, x-rays, and general practice.

The hospital served Saddam Hussein's family and friends, but has been closed for several years. There

were a lot of things the hospital needed before it was ready for the public. 1st Lt. Ashley Garry, a C Company 2/7 Inf. platoon leader, worked with the Owja Hospital Committee and the Salah ad Din Department of Health to get what they needed in order to open the doors. "We took on some parts of the hospital, some projects, and they took on a few, and we kind of met in the middle," Garry said. "We helped them get doctors and nurses hired. We got beds delivered, helped them fix their air conditioning and their air filters."

Dr. Hassan Zain Albein with the Ministry of Health in the Salah ad Din province worked with the 2/7 Inf. battalion commander Lt. Col. Todd Wood to make this project happen.

"It was a hospital that had been inactive over the last three years," Wood said. "He identified the need of

additional hospital coverage here in the Salah ad Din province. He and his staff figured out a way to refurbish a hospital, how to hire a new staff, and within three months the hospital opens up and serves about 10,000 people in this area alone."

The hospital is open, but there are still challenges ahead that face Owja hospital and the Iraqi medical community. "One of the shortages that they have around here is both female nurses and female doctors," Wood said. "Basically because the old regime stopped the training programs in the schools, which produced the large numbers of nurses and female doctors. Dr. Hassan is concentrating hard on the educational aspect of medical coverage here in this area."

Hassan wants to take full advantage of the freedom the Coalition Forces gave him and his people when

they were liberated from Saddam's rule.

"American people are giving us a lot of help," Hassan said. "Some of this help is by sending their children, sons and daughters, and some of them gave their lives to give us freedom. So when they are trying their best for us, why shouldn't we try to help ourselves also?"

The hospital has 40 beds, and the medical coverage is free for the Iraqi people. The doors may be open, but Soldiers with 2/7 Inf. plan to stay with the hospital project to make it better.

"Even though we opened today, there are still some things we need to work on," Garry said. "We'll keep making it better. We'll keep opening up more services for the people of Owja all the way down to north of Samarra. This hospital is going to be open for everybody."